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ABSTRACT

Rural communities are often plagued with socioeconomic challenges that contribute to family vulnerability and developmental challenges. Family Development Programs is a course that provides learning experiences related to rural community issues and family interactions with an opportunity to review programs that are provided within the region. Existing services to children and youth are assessed by the Family Development Task Force (FDTF) and programs are evaluated through testimony from the Family Development Focus Group (FDFG) regarding their contributions to family resilience. Also included are exercises to elicit strategic plans such as marital enrichment and alternative parenting strategies directed toward prevention of domestic violence and support of community safety. As a result of the FDTF and FDFG collaborations from 1994-1999 (Kansas Partnership for Family Development and Community Support), a needs assessment for the region is evolving, and priorities for family development are emerging. Also, the importance of a problem solving approach in implementing programs is encouraged through projects that seem useful in professional development of counselors and providers in community planning. Appendix A, Rationale for Program Implementation, is provided. Appendix B discusses individual committees involved with the program. (Contains 7 tables and 27 references.) (Author/MKA)

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TOWARD INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY WELL-BEING: THE WESTERN KANSAS EXPERIENCE IN FAMILY RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT *

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ABSTRACT

Rural communities are often plagued with socioeconomic challenges which contribute to family vulnerability and developmental challenges. Family Development Programs is a course which provides learning experiences related to rural community issues and family interactions, with an opportunity to review programs which are provided within the region. Existing services to children and youth are assessed by the Family Development Task Force (FDTF), and programs are evaluated through testimony from the Family Development Focus Group (FDFG) regarding their contributions to family resilience. Exercises to elicit strategic plans which include marital enrichment and alternative parenting strategies directed toward prevention of domestic violence and support of community safety are included. As a result of FDTF and FDFG collaborations from 1994-99 (Kansas Partnership for Family Development and Community Support), a needs assessment for the region is evolving, and priorities for family development are emerging. Also, the importance of a problem solving approach in implementing programs is encouraged through projects which seem useful in professional development of counselors and providers in community planning.

Key Words: Family Development, Family Resource Support, Community Safety

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Introduction

Nationally, dramatic socioeconomic and political change, i.e., technological innovation, and corporate realignment and mobility provide communities with challenges to address the well-being of individuals and families (Herr, 1989). In an effort to influence policy with family-based research findings, Voydanoff, 1990, and other family development leaders, described the resulting turbulence within communities. Communities in transition often experience a widening gap between "those who have and those who have-not", substantial decreases in family material well-being (Olson, 1990), and declines in personal opportunity. Hogan, 1990 pointed out that this is particularly true for single-parent families and women (Olson, 1990). Therefore, in many American communities, the quality of the home in which children receive parenting is threatened, as indicated by rates of drug abuse, suicide, alcoholism, divorce, teenage pregnancy, and family violence. Burr, 1990 noted that circumstances like this are often linked to growing up in non-supportive, rigid, or inconsistent families (Olson, 1990). One assumption of this project is that, too often during uncertain times, parents and community leaders are inclined to do more of

what they are already doing rather than initiate necessary changes.

Domestic violence represents a paradoxical phenomena within the underbelly of American culture. This seems especially true in rural communities where people may know a great deal about each other, yet have strong beliefs against relational violence. For Strauss, 1990 violence often originates within the family and its shadow continues to emerge in a number of at risk behaviors of youth, i.e., student achievement, preparation for relationships, recovery from parental divorce, running away, drug involvement, and child and youth crime (Olson, 1990). Also, early parenthood, poverty, male dominance and beliefs about physical punishment are implicated in the growing body of research on family violence. For example, while most parents spank their toddlers, certainly with the intent of discipline and control, they in fact contribute to the rate of community violence in dramatic ways. Therefore, parents may be exercising a great deal in parenting which may be seriously inappropriate.

These paradoxical elements may combine with community concerns and intensify existing conditions. Thus, the importance of tasks related to family resource development may appear elevated, especially in rural areas where resources are strained, yet do not appear to be addressed. For example, many communities

take an attributional approach to family and youth issues, predicated on a medical-disease model. However, the topics of community concern are usually multidimensional in nature. Therefore, the needs for traditional human service modes may appear dramatic and intense when organizations are not equipped by mandate, caseload, or dominant practice methods to address the full range of stresses experienced by many families, especially those with children (Weiss & Halpern, 1990). Further, the attributional model is believed to stigmatize individuals (Gardner, 1990), which may further erode frayed self-concepts, or support denial strategies in avoiding professional contact.

Further, the concept of family is changing rapidly. Rubin, 1990 indicated that currently, communities are likely composed of nuclear families, single individuals, non-marital heterosexual and gay male or lesbian cohabitation, single-parent families, remarried and step-families, childlessness, non-secretive extramarital relations, and multi-adult households (Olson, 1990). Also, McCubbin, 1990 pointed out that ethnicity and intermarriage between ethnic groups is an emerging characteristic in many communities (Olson, 1990). However, an early research effort described rural, and specifically Kansas marriages as slightly more stable than urban families, and with few distinctions in marital quality (Schumm, & Bollman, 1981). Therefore, a

highlight of this project is to point out that changes in the social fabric of many communities creates opportunities to attend and assess personal needs and differences in choice making styles on a multidimensional level. For example, marital enrichment may be a more promising method of family support through improved parenting than reliance on individual identification and intervention.

Often, rural residents may not utilize existing resources because of concern for travel, labeling, and practitioner background (Furrow, Russell, Jurich & Wright, 1991). Some program specialists believe that this problem can be substantially reduced by policy and practice which more adequately addresses community structure, i.e., collaboration with families (Bruner, 1990). However, many communities depend on a decision making style where authority is initiated at the top hierarchical levels on the assumption that empowerment "trickles down" to community members (Holt, 1992; Jorganson, 1989; Keegan, 1989). In contrast, there is growing recognition that comprehensive innovations in communities and programs is generated at the grass roots level and is likely to require structural change (Holt, 1992), persistence in leadership (Vidish & Bensman, 1968), and unique qualities in personnel who provide service (Jorganson, 1989). An important problem area is

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availability of developmental research and theory-based program information. Also, applications of a developmental perspectives to counseling and family support programs is not adequately explored. An important feature of the current project is the description of emerging characteristics of effective family-based program development, policy changes which is likely associated with it, and effectiveness in elevating family well-being in rural communities.

In summary, phenomena within/out the family elicit a number of youth and family concerns. In many ways, communities may be partners in the etiology of challenges to well-being. Also, there is growing evidence traditional approaches have limited effectiveness in alleviating childhood problems and supporting family well-being. Therefore, communities and organizations within them may be structured in ways that minimize change. Such an approach may contribute more to community stability than to personal well-being or family health of members. Therefore, it may be necessary for a family development program to provide a means for communities to assess their needs, a method for structural change, and an approach and strategy to improve individual skills in applying available family-based material. For example, family well-being may not be enriched by additional information about parenting, but may require support as the new skill is developed, and guidance in application to marital decisions.

Program Development Highlights

The Family Resource Coalition of America (FRCA) is committed to influence change in the way state governments and local communities deliver services to families. Among other goals, Kansas seems to be involved in the following FRCA developed initiatives that:

- Family support programs will be available in more communities throughout each state, and existing family support programs will be enhanced, expanded, and linked through statewide networks.

- State and local entities will possess the information and capacity to continue to develop their own family support agendas.

- The public will for family support will be built FRCA States Initiative, 2000).

A key ingredient within the initiative is the lack of coordinated effort between family support and economic development strategies (Harris, 1999). Primarily, there is concern regarding the worsening conditions resulting from the Federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, 1996 by expanding the economic-family (social) polarity. Harris (1999) believes a more productive response is likely by reducing boundaries among practitioners and a more united focus among diverse efforts at fund raising. Also, parent ownership, professional collaboration and joint community partnerships are ingredients for empowerment through mutual love of children in the Family Development Program in Albuquerque, New Mexico (Menning, 1999). Menning (1999) describes steps to

empowerment which include sharing by professionals, non-hierarchical relationships between parents and staff, implementation of a common purpose, and application of existing skills resulted in lasting community change.

Further, multi-cultural strategies of spending time with healthy people, literature and cultural events from different cultures, having a cultural guide, and learning to ask questions are important considerations in comprehensive programs (Cross, 1999). Cross (1999) believes that these practices contribute in meaningful ways to addressing basic human needs. Therefore, they are important skills for most practitioners. Also, family support programs can provide for safe environments in meaningful ways (FRCA Fact Sheet, 1999). The Fact Sheet (1999) offers Tips for Addressing Domestic Violence by working with survivors, perpetrators and children, i.e., presenting domestic violence information while inviting participants to a 10-week prevention course. In addition, leadership suggestions for parents as they start new activities, i.e., participation on a parent council, are useful (Payton, 1999). Family support and school-linked services have a variety of differences, but can develop a common purpose by appreciating their individual contributions to community well-being (Kagan & Neville, 1999). Further, important considerations in regard to these joint ventures include family

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support services in prevention of teen pregnancy, i.e., involving parents and children in the program design (FRCA Fact Sheet, 1999). In addition, prevention strategies may be implemented through a developmentally designed approach to career guidance, i.e., utilizing current resources in different ways (Pittman, 1999). Finally, disenfranchised groups may be included in meaningful ways to these program activities and approaches which is important in empowering the ageing population (Turner, 1999).

Method of Program Development

Dialogue between practitioners and professionals dealing with families and individual well-being within Kansas communities was established using a graduate course initiated in January, 1994 as the formal arena. This group was labeled the Family Development Task Force (FDTF), and a strategic planning procedure to address relevant outcomes of community harshness and family vulnerability was initiated through their efforts in meeting course requirements. Since the participants were professionals within the area, the dual purpose was justified. Further, members were recruited primarily from western Kansas and had a certain expertise regarding community and program needs. On two occasions, representatives from the entire state participated. The FDTF provided information regarding outcomes from widespread underemployment and population decline. It was a part of their

role to determine the degree socioeconomic transition was featured in their communities (Table 1).

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Discussions regarding the role of traditional problem solving models used by families in socioeconomic change were featured in group discussions. A prominent position was that this conventional posture seems to initiate and facilitate reductions in youth and child well-being directly through families.

Criteria for membership in the FDTF includes professional status; western Kansas residence; active participation in school and community (human service) counseling, and a commitment to this planning process. Also, the group meets to hear testimony from a Family Forum, which was composed of practitioners who provide service, directly or indirectly, to families, and to assess services and programs available in western Kansas communities. Further, it was hoped that information to determine the level of family support provided throughout the area could be gained. Together, both groups of professionals functioned to initiate a Kansas Partnership for Family Development and Community Support (KPFD-CS) (1994-present). Each member of the FDTF reviewed necessary documents regarding their community or consulted with other professionals in their area to determine the

relevance of the introductory description of socio-economic conditions to their community or area. In doing this, each task force member reviewed, revised and applied a rationale developed from this material (Appendix A).

Briefly, a profile of conditions for western Kansas includes population comparison, ethnic description, economic marginality and lifestyle paramaters. First, population is reduced and becoming older. The population of 38 western Kansas counties is about 10% of the state population, and about 75% of a large urban center nearby (Wichita). The state is predicting a significant increase in the amount of ethnic diversity. Second, conflicts and paradoxes exist. For example, while gross state product increased by more than five percent (5.3%), benefits to the work force increase by just over 3% (3.4%). Further, while educational attainment is stable for youth, it is much reduced at the university and professional level. Also, while the birth and marriage rate is stable, the death rate is increasing and the divorce rate is decreasing. This may mean attitudes in support of marriage and family are stable or an indicator of economic vulnerability. However, the increased death rate may be an indicator of poor choices in life style, environmental issues or an artifact of increased numbers of older people. Finally, while the unemployment rate is consistently low, indicators of

underemployment are elevated. This may mean that personal income is being supplemented by additional work (Table 1). At the public school levels, enrollment is increasing, attainment is above the national (although this may be an artifact of decreased numbers taking the SAT standardized test), and dropouts are decreasing in number (Helyer, 1997). Therefore, community strains are featured in the development of individuals and represented in family vulnerability.

Issues regarding delivery of services within western Kansas converge around distance between communities as a major burden, likely to heighten the stress of isolation. Similar to many areas of the country, rural Kansas communities were developed around their economic resources. In response to socioeconomic change over time, some communities "died" as their economic base disappeared, many struggled on, and some evolved into regional prominence. Therefore, an important characteristic of most communities in western Kansas is isolation (Rosenblatt & Anderson, 1981) increased in many ways by current economic transitions. To some degree, families which are traditional and conventional (often complemented by higher financial status) may have improved access to community resources. Further, the perception of resource availability may be exaggerated, i.e., people may not be as prosperous as they appear. For most

families, however, isolation compounds the stress of economic conditions as people struggle to respond meaningfully to economic challenge. At times like this, they may be less likely to consider the development of common concerns. In other words, community isolation may serve to support the raw effects of social class and decrease the mediation from historical levelers, like education. On the other hand, isolation provides opportunities (Rosenblatt & Anderson, 1981) for a community to be creative in providing support for personal transitions. Therefore, striving to establish networks, collaborations, and partnerships while implementing service programs and policies is important to program development. Communities working to improve resources can further provide valuable learning experiences. Those who are persistent in their efforts and consider refinements of conventional strategies may be intrinsically rewarded by unique solutions, i.e., matching strategies for resources and services to funding, exchanging workers rather than reducing staff, learning through video and distance teaching strategies, and technologically assisted teleconferencing.

By discussing the rationale (Appendix A) the FDTF came to consensus regarding the following community and program issues:

1. Recognize the concern, commitment and expertise of the parents of children and youth receiving services.

2. Provide comprehensive programs to address family vulnerability among diverse groups.

3. Develop novel community resources by planning strategically and inclusively.

4. Feature marital and relationship quality as community resources and highlight patterns of resilience in service delivery.

5. Bring value to work for personal fulfillment and family empowerment by implementing family development programs while attending to economic change.

6. Utilize developmental terms in describing community needs, implementing comprehensive programs and providing multidimensional approaches.

7. Recognize how conventional methods in problem solving may maintain violence, i.e., rural schools attempting to include new students.

8. Realign community resources by implementing social, educational, mental health, and the ministry through networking, collaborating and partnering (especially with corporate business).

9. Reduce personal storage of personal and community stress and reliance on traditionality, i.e., labeling and blaming, and conventional social policy by decreasing isolation.

Target Groups:

According to the Kids Count, 1999 data base available on line, there were 406 pregnancies, 66 deaths, 2,686 reported cases of child abuse with 1550 confirmed situations, 1,859 reports of alcohol use in the last 30 days with 427 reports of use of other drugs among children and youth. Finally, there were 2,126 law

violations and 676 out-of-home placements of children and youth in 38 western Kansas counties. Questions emerge in discussions of these social phenomena regarding community denial. It is noteworthy that of the 38 counties included in this report, four reports leave teen pregnancy blank, 13 reports leave death of children and youth blank, five reports leave confirmation of child abuse blank, 2 omit law violations, while 23 omit at least one of the substance abuse items. Therefore, to the degree leaving questions blank are indicators, there is a certain amount of denial which exists, at least among those agency personnel who respond to the Kids Count Survey.

Also, about 58% of the child abuse incidents are confirmed. Therefore, an important question emerges regarding the contribution made by child abuse perpetrators to the crime index. About 32% of the reported law violations result in out-of-home placements. This is substantially higher than the estimated 9% of children under the age of 5 in poverty who receive the benefit of Head Start. This might indicate there is a need for additional support strategies of Head Start programs and within communities. Further, according to best estimates, there are likely to be about [8% (Kids Count, 1999) of 192,237 (Helyar, 1997) total number of children] 15,379 who are "at risk" in 38 western Kansas counties.

The KPFD-CS (1999), considered several types of "acting out" among youth. They were characterized as target groups, however, the FDTF intended to use the context and characteristics of each group to direct planning.

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The Nominal Group procedure (individual listing, round-robin listing, description of patterns, realignment of considerations, refinement of priorities, and decision making and commitment) was used to restructure discussion and planning. For example, dropping out of school, adolescent pregnancy, and violence and delinquency among youth were behaviors used as initial points of discussion. The following characteristics were reported as commonly observed within these youth groups in western Kansas. They included:

> Substance abuse and underage drinking, single parent families, poor parenting skills, peer violence, sexual abuse and incest, school violence, child abuse and neglect (physical, sexual, and emotional), poverty, lack of jobs and opportunity, unemployment and underemployment, early sexual activity, isolation, loneliness, community passivity and denial.

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In addition, discussions within FDTF indicate that living conditions within the 38 western Kansas counties seem to irritate

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the environment for individuals struggling with these target behaviors and exacerbates healing. These observations are consistent with Kansas demographic statistics provided in Table 1 and include:

Socio-economic change, attitudes toward community violence, family stress, dual career issues, divorce and parenting relationships, cyclical exploitation and opportunism betweem community members, language barriers, life skills and isolation and inadequate adult modeling.

One of the important features of the annual Kids Count records, is documentation of the frequencies a variety of services directed are received by vulnerable children. Examination of this information may provide promising leads by which to develop programs. For example, there are 3,932 live births in the area, and one can project that at the age of 18, ideally all these children will graduate from high school. However, only about 76% of them achieve this developmental goal. There are a number of reasons for this disparity, i.e., one is that birth rates may vary over time, parents may move, and children die. However, when one averages a number of counties, some of these phenomena are likely to be balanced by other phenomena, i.e., some parents move into a county, over time different years begin to become normative, and some counties have

a low death rate for children. Therefore, one possible conclusion might be the drop out rate as reported, may be a low estimate. For example, about 24% of this cohort may not graduate from high school and the reasons for this are important.

Further, poverty may be an inadequate explanation for developmental lags (at-risk labeling). For example, programs for providing free meals have high levels of participation. In fact, participants exceed the number of children in poverty. Also, the numbers of children participating in Head Start programs is quite low, given the number of children who are eligible by poverty status alone. For example, of the 11,682 children in poverty for 38 western Kansas counties, only 930 of them participate in Head Start (7.9%). Ironically, 8% of the some unknown standard receive a benefit for which far more are eligible. In fact, if Head Start programs were provided to all the children in poverty, it would still be nearly 4,000 short of the 8% state projection for at-risk status.

There is a good deal of information available for parents of infants. Most hospitals and doctors offices provide it. However, of the live births, only about 70% of the parents participate in programs directed at providing this information. Further, while there is a national effort toward immunization of children, only about 2/3 are immunized through programs

participating in the Kids Count assessment. This does not necessarily mean that only 2/3 of the children are immunized. It may indicate there are children who are immunized who are not a part of the Kids Count data base. However, it may be evidence that further efforts are needed to increase participation or more complete accounting, or public information and discussion. For example, some parents are likely to be philosophically opposed to immunization and their children are not participating.

There are about 2,982 graduates from high school in the 38 western Kansas counties. Of these 2,403 (80%) have some sort of post-secondary school plans. There are a variety of planning options, however, and if nearly 20% of the high school graduates have no plan at all, it represents a substantial challenge for school counselors. Also, if added to the number of suspected drop outs, there is a dramatic need for counselors. Further, the number of children aged 13 or under who are in need of child care services is extraordinary (11,680). Also, the number of licensed centers available to provide the service is limited (1,979), and is a ratio of about 11 children for every center. The kinds of child care available include child care centers, group day care centers, licensed day care homes, pre-schools and registered day care homes (Helyar, 1997). This is some evidence of a dramatic

need for child care which is presumably met by extended family, friends and un-licensed care providers.

Finally, there about 85% of the jobs available for the number of children who are likely to need them in the future. While a good deal of community activity addresses economic development, it remains a prominent concern. Certainly, people retire, die or leave the area so there may be enough jobs for everyone in a particular county. However, when considering the other evidence for underemployment and inadequate community resources, the number of working adults underscores a community concern throughout the western Kansas area. Further, the corporate world seems to be motivated in a singular way by profit, and attention to family and human development may be an unreasonable expectation. Yet, this seems necessary. Formal collective bargaining activity may contribute in a positive way toward expanding the interests and activities of community business. Further, since about 20% of the adult population has not completed high school, and 52% of the adults in Kansas have a high school diploma or less, increased prenatal care education, Head Start Programs and public school support for parenting and counseling may be necessary for retention and enrichment of existing programs.

In addition, communities may be required to expand existing services in novel ways. For example, twelve of the 38 western Kansas counties have no Head Start Programs at all, and all of them can be more fully utilized. Head start is for pre-school age children, and there are virtually no community programs for elementary, middle school children and secondary school youth beyond food programs. Quality and type of care for the group of school age children and pre-adolescents emerges as an important community prevention issue. Relationship development (including sexual), parenting support, and career counseling appear to be important considerations to further address this need.

Family Focus Group (FDFG) Members:

This group testified before the FDTF-1999 regarding their experience in providing services to families. To qualify for participation, Family Development Focus Group (FDFG) members documented professional activity, and described the level of service available to families. Membership (FDFG-1999) included representatives from:

Mother to Mother Ministry
Head Start
First Call for Help
Certified Trainers for Parenting Programs:
  Developing Capable People and
  Preparing for the Drug Free Years
Hospice Program
N. W. Kansas Family Shelter
New Beginnings for Families & Children

Parents & Children Together (PACT)/
County Coalition for the Prevention of Child Abuse
Youth Ville
Juvenile Justice Authority
NW Kansas Area Agency on Ageing

They met at one of the sites which were connected through Western Kansas Information Network (WIN), a audio media distribution technique provided by Fort Hays State University through the Virtual College. Meetings with the FDTF members lasted about an hour as they testified and responded to questions.

Family Development Task Force Members:

Participants were invested in family resource development and providing services in their communities. Further, they were graduates students in a course addressing family resource programs. They were responsible for the assessment of programs throughout western Kansas, and developing a strategic plan for the delivery of services in support of resources for families. Membership (FDTF-1999) included representatives from: Hays, Colby, Garden City, Great Bend and Liberal.

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Also, by reviewing presentations and participating in other opportunities for cognitive exploration, extensive discussion to improve program development was likely introduced. In addition,

members were asked to present activities to a known couple or family for personal growth (Sporakowski, 1993).

The Family Development Task Force was subdivided into committees which concentrated on the issues associated with specific target groups in geographic areas. Committees selected chairs who facilitated discussion. They met once each week to discuss what they discovered in individual research efforts, often facilitated by the WIN technology. Also, they contacted each other during the week by telephone and fax modes as the need arose. Each committee included task force members, often from the same geographic area, and were self-regulated in discussions and implementation of the Nominal Group Process. While they were expected to integrate new learning derived from focus group testimony and study, task force members had their own expertise, including awareness of needs within the area. It was expected that these backgrounds and insights be included in the committee work. The following topics were committee concentration areas:

Committee A - Underemployment and Opportunity;

Committee B - Community Resistance

Committee C - Information and Resources

The task force members recruited focus group participants to provide testimony, researched at-risk phenomena and programs for family resource support development, and participated in the

strategic planning exercise. The outcome was a strategic plan which was intended to address missing elements in programs and contributes to personal well-being, allowed for community circumstance and improved family vulnerability. Each action plan (available on request) was evaluated and integrated into a final document, and members of the FDTF received a copy of the final integration to use as they desire in local communities.

Assessment of Community Needs

Criteria for assessing testimony of Focus Group members was derived from Dougherty (1993). These guidelines generally reflect likely differences among family development programs and are expressed numerically (Level I: Information & Service; Level II: Education & Support; Level III: Group Support & Advocacy; Level IV: Systematic Collaboration; and Level V: Comprehensive & Therapeutic). FDTF members were provided with an interview format utilized by the Family Resource Coalition (Best Practices project - Focus Group Discussion Guide) to provide an alternative to Focus Group members. An initial interview was made, and following testimony from the focus group participant, the task force members discussed the degree of family based activity applied to well-being and vulnerability. It was assumed that all levels of family services are important for family support within a particular community.

Overall, program assessment provided information for a variety of observations regarding program development in the region. First, there was diversity in approaches used by programs representing all five categories. However, programs are widely distributed geographically, yet clustered around stable communities. Finally, an important feature of these assessments seems to involve distinguishing between the method and the message perhaps through lapses in professional dialogue. For example, the need for diversity of service was addressed by a resource guide suggested by two committees.

Moreover, programs which are available seem to be effective yet may be asked to provide services beyond their resources. For example, community agencies sometimes request services which are beyond the ability of the program resource to provide. For example, a court representative may recommend a family information service to parents who are likely to need service with more direct professional participation. In many ways, this issue illustrates the problem communities have distinguishing between first- and second-order change, and their acceptance of first order change. It also indicates how desperation, while well motivated, may lead to "short term" (band-aids) rather then multidimensional problem solving. The results for all years included in the assessment is found on Table 3.

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Further, throughout the testimony there was a good deal of debate regarding the depth of family dynamics addressed by programs. Some programs do address several features of change, and provide a certain intensity and depth with individual families. However, they did not typically appear to make program services available in a comprehensive way. However, there are three efforts emerging which seem to be comprehensive and multidimensional. One is in the public sector and exists in response to the privatization of Social and Rehabilitation Services. The second is private and involves partnerships between the medical and counseling professions. A third lies in developing collaborative relationships between communities in order to share resources and services.

Implications for Program Development:

An important element in program implementation seems to lie in the distinction between first and second order change. First order change was described as behavioral, and second order change was discussed as systemic within meetings of the FDTF. The differences were presented as less characteristic of a specific program, but more a direction for many programs. In other words, addressing second order change in a community is not likely

effective if the needs of that community are largely behavioral (first order). Also, if there is a need for second order (system) change, programs which focus on behavior are less likely to produce desired results. This understanding within the Task Force was stylized around the solution-focused approach of Berg (1995). Also, the FDTF was interested in learning about the degree counseling programs for families implement a brief therapy model to enhance family development programs.

Program Planning Proposals

A paradigm shift within and between communities may be necessary before programs address the several dimensions of family development. For example, without exception, FDTF members observed community strategic planing was implemented to benefit economic improvement while ignoring the well-being needs of families. Providing the means for different community dialogue was considered an important starting point in community transformation. It was generally expressed among members of the Partnership that corporate leaders did not return in kind the resources they typically extracted from the community (time away from children). Therefore, professionals are likely to make dramatic improvements in family life by active advocacy for

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improvements in the workplace. Parents who spend most of their time working are less effective in care-giving. Also, community participation in business decisions was considered important to establishing shared interests.

Further, members of other important groups were not included in dialogue or decisions, i.e., collective bargaining representatives, and feminist and gay/lesbian leadership. For example, it was believed that business be expected to invest in the community beyond providing wages and benefits which also need increases. Also, it was believed by FDTF participants that children and youth are encouraged to be passive and reactive rather than assertive and proactive. To counter this community tendency, the importance to development of children and youth who experience active involvement, along with parents as appropriate, in community planning was discussed. In order to accomplish this, it was suggested that they be included in meaningful ways in their own learning processes. This sometimes happens in schools, and to the degree it occurs may be extended to families by providing information and preparation for parents. For example, a great deal of community conflict may be diverted by preparing parents to provide sex education and career planning.

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The FDTF generally supported the idea of including all members of the community in a family development program to combat the general observation that programs are selective in who they empower. Further, grass-roots and democratic style of decision making was a priority for the FDTF. Sometimes specific skills are ignored in recruitment of volunteers. For example, grant writing was considered a special skill and an important function for programs. Yet, it is often left under-developed. Similarly, it was recognized that there are many people in a community who have skill, time or desire to contribute to the well-being of others. Tapping volunteer energy was believed a valuable community resource.

It was observed that there is a great deal of information and other helpful resources which are available (Table 5). The problem seemed to be an issue of general distribution and availability. A Resource Center or coordinating service entity was suggested as an important contribution to the region. Distribution of research based material and support to families and individuals were important activities.

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Further, individuals and families may "fall through the cracks"

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and an Interagency Council or Commission of local professionals was described as a technique to alleviate such a problem. The needs assessment, review of research and development material, and facilitation of program implementation were related activities. Finally, it was believed that community transition is an ethical dilemma in many ways. In other words, it is necessary for community members to be conscious and aware of the need for comprehensive applications, multidimensional perception of events, democratic designs for problem solving strategies, and deliberate approaches to include relevant people. An important way to generate attention to these issues was believed the inter-generational dialogue technique. Another was the implementation of multi-cultural counseling approaches. A feminist presence may provide such conscious dialogue. Also, recognition of gay and lesbian approaches to living in a heterosexual world is valuable discussion for rural communities. Also, awareness between parents regarding differences in parenting (McKenry & McKelvey, 1994) may provide a basis for information exchange and respect while participating in support groups.

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APPENDIX A

Rationale for Program Implementation:

Current demographic and socioeconomic trends are likely to continue in western Kansas. This means that at a later time vulnerable communities may report a substantially large at-risk population among its youth. Concurrently, unless conditions which challenge families improve, reductions in family resources are likely to continue. Such harsh conditions facilitate a cycle of vulnerability among families and at-risk characteristics in youth. In other words, difficult economic transitions expose large numbers of families to underemployment and vulnerability from financial hardship. Communities responding to economic changes in the area often ignore the family and personal challenges from family transitions, marginal incomes and declining opportunity. This means teen pregnancy, substance abuse, domestic violence, acts of running away and delinquency, and inadequate support for personal boundaries through various types of child abuse, do not receive systematic attention in most communities.

Further, a large number of single parent families is a community concern contributing to harshness. The youthful composition of this group places them in traditionally unstable jobs with low salary levels unless resilient qualities are activated. Since education sequences are often incomplete among this group, their upward mobility is limited as well. Most are women who historically provide a secondary family income source in the conventional family structure. As single parents, however, their marginal employment and lack of support (often the responsibility of the father) imposes hardship on the children. Some communities continue to implement social strategies which focus bias on this group. To the degree this is true, some churches, schools and agencies withhold or limit community resources, and further marginalize these young women. For example, their experience may result in isolation which hampers networking strategies, and ultimately their resilience to overcome challenge.

Also, young males tend to be leaving rural areas in large numbers. This means many if not all counties, i.e., western Kansas, experience population declines, and usually a reduction in primary wage earners. While this may seem to be an advantage to urban centers because of vocational opportunity, in the pursuit of better jobs these young males may arrive in larger cities unprepared for urban life and unaware of employment challenges. Further they are less likely to disclose difficulty and their social and economic naivete may open them to the opportunist and predatory activities. Further, traditional values and conventional backgrounds regarding dating and

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sexual activity indicate emotional turmoil among some of these young men. Therefore, they are more likely to contribute to urban disorganization than its stability. Also, they often leave family responsibilities behind, while those who remain in rural communities are likely to be middle and aging adults. These groups do not traditionally invest, emotionally or financially, in schools or community services. Further, young women are often anchored by infants and young children, and remain in rural areas to be near their families of origin. One of the outcomes is that primary support networks are heavily weighted toward the conventional styles of life and traditional modes of problem solving.

Because of community and funding challenge, then, resources available for support of families are likely declining throughout Kansas, emulating a national trend. Also, competition for them is intensifying, at a time when there is substantial need for family resource support services in rural communities. Some are abandoning selected services while others are sharing resources with other communities. The competitive milieu within a region may introduce complexity and unfamiliar concerns in the policy making process. This may add to the emotional loading of issues.

Regional Mission:

Family development in Kansas focuses on personal resiliency and is facilitated by preventive education and support activities within local communities. It includes collaboration within and partnerships between communities, and requires personal commitment from professionals within the area. School Counselors are especially challenged to make a formal investment in family development. There is a similar relationship of Community Counselors to the learning environment. Community members are encouraged to personally guarantee the safety of youth and children within the home, school, and community. The well-being which is likely to result, influences personal opportunity, empowerment, support and responsibility within diverse groups. Family development activities ensure personal striving by honoring and enriching family strengths, advocating complementary vision in planning (family AND economic development) for Kansas communities to forge a future. It necessitates the creation of community structures which provide information, education, support and counseling (therapy) while teaming for the development of family resource support services, partnering in community planning, and advocating for comprehensiveness in distribution of services.

* Depending on geographical and political proximity, an overarching political entity seems necessary to facilitate less territorial restructuring.

* The Kansas Association for Marriage and Family Counseling (KAMFC) and the Kansas Counseling Association (KCA), and public school system(s) within local areas may be invited to participate in the development of measurable objectives and implementation.

* Resources from community agencies often already exist. Therefore, family development and parenting material is available from the Family Information Services, County Extension Services, and the Family Resource Coalition. Each member of the KPFD-CS (1999) is necessary to serve as the resource person for the distribution of material. They may be responsible for developing the resource link to other Task Force(s) and providing publicity regarding access to information.

* To assure credibility, it is important for material which is made available for public consumption be based in the research and knowledge base regarding family and human development.

* Members of the KPFD-CS (1999) may consider themselves members of a Professional Network for as long as they desire. Personal communication requesting removal is considered adequate to end the formal relationship.

APPENDIX B

Committee A: Mission and Goals for Underemployment and Opportunity

Communities which empower themselves in order to build successful economies seem to have effective leaders, a cooperative relationship between public and private sectors, are entrepreneurial, retain existing business while creating new ones, improve the commercial relationships, learn to capture unearned monies and recruit new business and industries. Perhaps, more important, they develop methods of coordinating their resources which address the needs of children and families. Strategies which provide awareness of community members for available resources, assessment of the needs of children (especially those at-risk), recognizes the life span in creating programs, and acknowledges the credibility of lifestyles within it and tolerates individual choice in determining healthy relationships and providing for career development.

* Regardless of activity, all individuals are participants in the process of community enrichment regardless of social class, ethnic group, age, gender or world view, including sexual orientation.
  * Organize focus groups and community forums to create a plan which addresses economic change, specifically the role of collective bargaining and including the needs of children and families.
  * Encourage a representative from each school and community agency to review available grants and develop a plan for applications.
  * Develop a centralized volunteer base which focuses on assessed needs of the community and utilizes existing programs.
  * Invite a sponsor, i.e. a labor union, to provide a residential facility for youth in crisis (perhaps recovery from substance abuse) which also provides a prevention approach and activities throughout the community
  * Provide interested parents with the background necessary for career information to benefit their children from a developmental perspective.

Committee B: Mission and Goals for Community Resistance

Our world is filled with events for which a single world-view complicates in program development. The vague nature of community needs necessitates clarity of communication and personal commitment. Community resistance allows individualism

to dominate community culture. Therefore, a forum for sharing personal concerns and clarifying community issues and priorities is necessary for the development of individuals, within families and between communities. A more meaningful world-view is likely to be forged by: providing opportunities for people to connect with existing community resources; collaborating with community members in the development of new resources; demonstrating personal benefit from community involvement; and consideration for the needs of those age groups, socioeconomic levels, and religious and cultural backgrounds which are represented in the community. This will be accomplished by:* Development of a Resource Center for western Kansas communities which (but not limited to) lists names, addresses and telephone numbers of various social service agencies, support groups, mental health and medical services in the area. It produce a directory which will be available on request at libraries, agencies, chambers of commerce, county courthouses, and churches. It will be included in the Area Wide Phone Directory.

* A Regional Interagency Council to bring representatives from existing agencies together to improve the quality of services offered to at-risk populations. It will function as a brainstorming group for the development of new resources to serve the western Kansas community. It will include a parent group or representative from a parent group who is utilizing services. A press release will be distributed after each meeting.

* The Resource Center will include a centralized volunteer force. It will provide an opportunity for those who experience difficulty to support others in current needs through support and self-help groups. It will provide a vehicle to model and advocate regarding the personal benefits derived from services which are utilized. Also, the Regional Interagency Council will allow testimony at each meeting from a volunteer participant.

* Members of the Regional Interagency Council, editors of the Regional Directory of Resources, and volunteers who participate in the Family Resource Development Movement will make a formal, personal commitment to not knowingly exploit or oppress another person. They will focus on strengths of all people in the community to create solutions that affirm the dignity of all families, and comprehensively enriches the quality of life for the community.

* The Regional Interagency Council will collaborate among

agencies to determine the extent existing services to children are not addressed, and prepare a research and theory based rationale to describe vulnerability among families. From this assessment, they are to design a comprehensive program to reduce gaps in services and directly address personal well-being within the community of western Kansas.

Committee C: Mission and Goals for Information and Resources

Each community in western Kansas is responsible for recognizing and supporting the diversity of its citizens whether they are children or adults. Emphasis will be placed on making children a priority in the family. Promoting and ensuring the safety and well-being of children within the home, school and community is a responsibility of each member of the community. Family based services will facilitate this process by providing strategies and actions developed to empower individuals and provide training in the areas of: Establishing and respecting personal boundaries of children and adults; parenting skills; the importance of maintaining relationships with extended family members; employment search, training and opportunities, and sexuality education for children and adults.
Each school and agency within the area will develop and maintain a local sub-directory of resources and services available to children and families. The directory will include contact information for agencies, educational resources, support groups, health services, employment services, interest groups or individuals as indicated by the characteristics of the area. The directory will emphasize ease of use (including the English and Spanish languages) and comprehensiveness of listings.

1.

Family based services and programs will include parents, schools and community agencies. Programs will be designed to empower the youth in the area, i.e., offer support, guidance, increase self-esteem, counter peer pressure and provide sexuality education.

* Counselors within the area will advocate and participate in existing activities emphasizing family diversity. Diversity in families - roles, values, behaviors, and standards - must be respected by all members of the area. Additional programs will be designed to be adaptable to unique family dynamics.

* School Counselors will be responsible for collecting research and theory based material focusing on family development to enrich marriages, improve parenting, and reinforce personal

boundaries of children but available to any community member.

* Counselors within area schools and agencies will network, collaborate and develop partnerships within their respective communities. They will extend these efforts across communities to endorse extra-curricular activities, assure family activities are available in each community, and support literacy programs between communities. They will encourage the matching of elderly volunteers with families where literacy is an issue.

* Initiate a project to include generational discussions about safe dialogue between community cultures by advocating to leaders that youth become responsible for community beautification, determination and distribution of resources to facilitate this project, and the authority to implement strategies and activities.

Table 1

Population 1996-97 (38 western Kansas counties)		230,539	
	Wichita	310,236	
Rural		765,010	(30.9%)
Urban		1,712,564	(69.1%)
Kansas Ageing Population			
65+ 1970		266,201	
1990		341,977	(Incr. 22%)
Kansas Ethnicity			
1990	White	2,231,968	
	All	2,477,574	(+ 9.9%)
2020	White	2,735,000	
	All	3,347,000	(+18.2%)

Kansas Marriages and Divorce (1993-95)

Marriages	21,527	21,524	21,057
Divorces	12,068	11,659	11,029

Births and Deaths (1992-95)

Births	37,848	37,283	37,269	37,087
Deaths	22,052	23,508	23,219	23,807

Crime Index (Increase of 57% over 26 years)

1968	58,799
1994	136,838

Socioeconomic Conditions

Kansas Gross Product (5.3% Increase in Millions of dollars)

1990	51,692
1992	56,164

Average Annual Pay (3.4% Increase in Actual Dollars)

1994	22,907
1995	23,709

Median Income by Selected States (1994 Actual Dollars)

Kansas	29,544
U.S.	31,241
Lowest	22,952
Highest	42,105
Oregon	30,609
Colorado	33,118
Nebraska	29,040
Oklahoma	25,788
Missouri	28,542
Average of 38 western Kansas counties (1994)	22,131
Average Wage (1995)	18,109

Education Attainment (1990)

No H.S. Grad. (19%)	H.S. Grad. (33%)	Some College (27%)	Bacc. (14%)	Grad./ Prof. (7%)	Total 25+ (100%)
293,272	514,177	428,110	221,016	109,361	1,565,936

Enrollment X Graduates X Dropouts)

1994	460,905	26,125	6,698
1995-96	463,008	25,786 (Decr. 1.3%)	6,422 (Decr. 4.3%)

SAT Scores [1974 to 1994-5 Kansas X (U.S.)]

Verbal	503 (435)	503 (428)
Math	540 (472)	557 (482)
Taking Test	41%	9%

Table 1b

Developmental Lag Points X 38 western Kansas Counties

Mean calculations are rounded to the nearest whole number

Group	Teen Preg-Nancy	Child Death	Child Abuse Rept	Child Abuse Conf.	Substance Abuse Alch.	Substance Abuse Other	Juvenile Court Filings	Out-of-Home Plcmnt
4	69	9	384	270	349	103	338	108
15	6	2	54	18	92	17	40	13
11	3	1	19	14	45	4	12	3
8	2	2	16	14	38	5	7	2
Totals								
38	406	66	2,685	1,550	1,859	477	2,109	637
M of M	102	17	671	388	465	119	527	159

Table 1c

38 western Kansas Counties X Number of Children X Resource Estimates

Mean calculations are rounded to the nearest whole number

Group*	Children*	At Risk Children Est.(8%) < 5 *	Live Births*	Services Received Prenatal	Immuniz.	Low Birth Weight
4	27,033	2,163	1,658	115	102	73	8
15	4,177	334	352	72	15	52	5
11	2,671	214	214	38	28	25	2
8	1,752	140	140	26	19	26	2
M of M	5,509	441	405	26	19	26	2
Totals							
38	192,237	15,379	15,382	3,932	2,732	2,652	262

Services Received Free Meals	Poverty	Head Start	Child Care	# of Centers*	H.S. Grads.	Post Sec. Plans	Employees *	
319	362	33	522	120	227	218	18,959	
272	223	23	265	22	74	60	3,529	
159	127	13	131	15	48	42	2,114	
109	83	8	109	10	29	25	1,414	
394	307	36	307	52	78	63	4,299	M of M
14,989	11,682	930	11,680	1,979	2,982	2,403	163,350	Totals

Table 2

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES (63)

Individual Support (18)

CASA of the High Plains (3)
Head Start (3)
Alternative Schools (3)
School Psychologists (3)
Significant School Programs (6)
Examples: Heartland Early Education Program, New Beginnings for Children and Families, Central Cooperative Education Center

"Government" Programs in Transition (11)

Child Welfare Services (4)
Privatized Agency Services (4)
Court Adaptation Services (3)
Examples: Center for Counseling, Cedar Branch Family Services, Juvenile Justice Authority, Taiwan Child Welfare Service

Expanded Community Services (18)

Family Shelter (3)
Extension Service (9)
Lutheran Social Services (3)
Adult Conflict Management (3)
Examples: Retrouvayle, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, YWCA Family support Center

Parent Support Services (16)

Parents University (3)
Parents as Teachers (4)
Parent Training (3)
Parents and Teachers Together (3)
First Call for Help (3)
Examples: Coalition for Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Advocate, Child Watch Visitation Program, Family Hope Center

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Table 3

Year	Number of Programs	Evaluation Range	Mean	Process Issue
1994	6			
1995	16			State-wide
1996	16			State-wide
1997	16	1.1 - 5.9	3.7	Halo Effect
1998	11	1.5 - 5.9	3.4	Method/Message
1999	12	1.7 - 5.9	3.4 (s.d. = 1.2)	Over-Extension
	77		3.5	

FAMILY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Year		Doherty Program Types				
		1	2	3	4	5
1994	(6)	1	1	2	1	1
1995	(16)	4	6	4	1	1
1996	(16)	4	5	3	3	1
1997	(16)	3	2	5	4	2
1998	(11)	2	1	3	3	2
1999	(12)	2	5	2	2	1
TOTALS	(77)	16	20	19	14	8
		Education & Service	Education & Support	Group Support & Advocacy	Systematic Collaboration	Comprehensive & therapeutic

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Table 4

Regional Goals

1. Community transformation to support family well-being.

2. Partnerships to assure child and youth safety.

3. Collaborations to provide opportunities for life span learning.

Committee Program Proposals

1. Provide comprehensive services

2. Include opportunities for community participation

3. Initiate start up funding through grant writing

4. Implement a network of volunteers

5. Collaborate and Partner with Corporate, Business, Labor, Ethnic and Feminist leaders

6. Provide parents with parenting, career and sexuality education

7. Develop a Family Resource Support Center

8. Implement a professional Interagency Council

9. Include conscious multi-cultural planning and generational dialogues regarding community safety and environmental health in mission statements

Table 5

AVAILABLE RESOURCES HANDOUT

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